

# ARS □ ERS □ NASS □ NIFA

## *Policies and Procedures*

**Title:** Cellular Devices and Service Management

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**Originating Office:** Office of the Chief Information Office,  
Communications Services Staff,  
Telecommunications Services Mission Area Control Officer

**Distribution:** ARS Headquarters, Areas and Locations and NAL

In 2009-2010, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) tasked USDA Agencies with gathering information on Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs) and then met with points of contact throughout each of the Agencies at random to perform spot checks on wireless devices. Their findings indicated that in most Agencies, cellular devices and services were being ordered autonomously with little oversight and actively maintained inventories were virtually non-existent.

To address the OIG's findings and request for Agency oversight, the ARS OCIO, in conjunction with the Communications Services Staff (CSS) and the Telecommunications Mission Area Control Officer (TMACO), are implementing policies and procedures that will ensure the strategic, centralized management of wireless assets throughout ARS and NAL.

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# 1. Purpose

The widespread adoption of wireless technologies within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) presents many management challenges due to the proliferation of wireless consumer products in the marketplace and the tendency for USDA to treat wireless acquisitions as commodity buys. The most significant challenge associated with this commodity approach to purchasing wireless technologies occurs when the lack of a central acquisition strategy results in purchases of non-standard products and services. Each device purchased such as a cellular phone, Personal Digital Assistant (PDA), smartphone, iPad (unless using WIFI only for internet access) requires a service plan. Once accounts are established with the wireless vendors, service plans automatically renew each year with little oversight causing the Agencies to lose visibility and control of wireless assets. This Policy & Procedure (P&P) has been developed to promote practices that will ensure strategic, centralized management of wireless assets throughout the Agricultural Research Service (ARS).

# 2. Background

In late 2009, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) tasked the Agencies with gathering information on all Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs) in use at the time. After reviewing the initial report, the OIG then met with points of contact throughout each of the USDA Agencies at random to perform spot checks on wireless devices. These meetings occurred over several months in mid-2010. Their findings indicated that in most Agencies, cellular devices and services were being ordered autonomously with little oversight and actively maintained inventories were virtually non-existent.

As a result of these findings, the USDA Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) actively pursued a Cellular Plan optimization study. The study identified an opportunity to implement a unified cellular service which, when implemented in a phased approach, will:

- Establish new Department-wide cellular contracts (Blanket Purchase Agreements [BPAs]) with Verizon, AT&T and Sprint (completed)
- Eliminate old expensive plans
- Consolidate 843 plans
- Allow for centralized management while permitting decentralized ordering
- Save \$1.6 million/year in Phase 1, with additional savings in Phases 2 and 3.

To address the OIG's findings and request for Agency oversight and to take advantage of the BPAs, the ARS OCIO, in conjunction with the Communications Services Staff (CSS) and the Telecommunications Mission Area Control Officer (TMACO), are implementing policies and procedures as outlined below.

# 3. Policy

The ARS OCIO, CSS, TMACO, and Wireless Designated Agency Representatives (WDARs) shall work together to improve the management of ARS's wireless devices and service plans. ARS offices/locations shall limit wireless purchases to those technologies or services that are available through the established BPAs as approved by the USDA OCIO. Requests for exceptions to this policy shall be submitted to the ARS TMACO Office according to the guidelines found in Section 6.3 below. All approvals are subject to TMACO authorization.

# 4. Responsibilities

## a. ARS OCIO shall:

Uphold purchasing strategies as established by the USDA OCIO.

Provide customer support to offices/locations regarding the BPAs to include making information available regarding wireless technologies and associated pricing.

Ensure a standard naming convention is applied to all USDA/ARS and National Agricultural Library (NAL) accounts and invoices associated with the purchase of wireless technologies and services so they are easily identifiable when required to generate reports on such.

Serve as a liaison between the service providers and the end-users.

Implement management controls that optimize the value of wireless assets throughout their life cycle.

Generate analyses and reports of wireless technology assets ARS-wide to determine baseline spending, determine patterns and trends for validation and planning, and provide inventory data.

Establish procedures by which the WDAR annually reviews wireless usage throughout their office/location and adjust plans to achieve the maximum benefit.

Establish procedures to ensure that upon employee termination, Government-owned wireless assets are returned to the office/location WDAR and that service is terminated or reassigned to another employee or contractor associated with that office/location.

Establish procedures to ensure that upon office closure or relocation, the WDAR processes the necessary modifications, changes, or deletions for recurring wireless service charges.

**b. Offices/Locations shall:**

Implement the purchasing strategies and management controls established by the ARS OCIO.

Maintain management controls over wireless assets to safeguard them against improper use, theft, and undue deterioration.

Establish and enforce procedures for regularly reviewing wireless bills to ensure that:

- (1) The bills are accurate.
- (2) Individual plans are effective.
  - a. Usage should not exceed the monthly plan allowance.
  - b. The monthly plan allowance should not routinely exceed the monthly charges by a significant amount.
  - c. Monthly plan allowances that routinely exceed the monthly charges by a significant amount should be adjusted accordingly through the WDAR and TMACO Office at the request of the employee's supervisor or their designee.

Establish procedures by which the WDAR annually reviews wireless usage throughout their office/location and adjust plans to achieve the maximum benefit.

Establish procedures to ensure that upon employee termination, Government-owned wireless assets are returned to the WDAR and those services are terminated or reassigned to another employee or contractor. All changes and terminations MUST be processed through the TMACO Office using the ARS Cellular Device/Service Plan Form.

Establish procedures to ensure that upon office closure or relocation, the WDAR processes the necessary modifications, changes, or deletions for recurring wireless service charges through the TMACO Office using the ARS Cellular Device/Service Plan Form.

Establish procedures to ensure that upon office closure or relocation, Government-owned wireless assets are moved or properly discarded. Procedures for disposition of wireless assets are outlined in the Agricultural Property Management Regulations.

## 5. Authorities

Department Manual DM 3300-005 “Policies for Planning and Managing Wireless Technologies in USDA,” November 10, 2010

OIG letter to Christopher L. Smith and Edward Knipling dated May 5, 2011, Subject: USDA’s Management and Security Over Wireless Handheld Devices (Audit 50501-1-IT)

ARS 2010 SmartPhone Review Summary of Findings (50501-1-IT)

## 6. Procedures

**6.1** Offices/Locations should have a designated Single Point of Contact (SPOC) and a back up if possible for all cellular purchases. This individual - often an Administrative Assistant/Officer, Program Assistant, Purchasing Agent, or Accounting Technician – has oversight in monitoring cellular bills for fraud, waste and abuse, and for inputting the applicable data into the Telephone and Utilities Management System (TUMS) for payment by the National Finance Center (NFC). The SPOC must be on the WDAR list in order to place orders with Verizon and AT&T. To add, change, or delete an SPOC/WDAR, please contact the TMACO Office (Maureen Harris, 301-504-1088 or [maureen.harris@ars.usda.gov](mailto:maureen.harris@ars.usda.gov)).

**6.2** All requests pertaining to wireless devices or services (i.e. new, upgrades, service plan modifications, end-user name changes, etc.) for all cell phones, PDAs, smartphones, and iPads must be processed as follows:

- End user approaches office/location WDAR for information on vendor BPAs.
- WDAR contacts TMACO Office to obtain information regarding the service plans offered under one or all three BPAs so they can determine which vendor’s service plan best suits the end user’s needs.
- Once a vendor, device, and service plan are agreed upon, the WDAR completes the ARS Cellular Device/Service Plan Form in full (Exhibit A) and submits it to the TMACO office at [ARS-TMACO@ars.usda.gov](mailto:ARS-TMACO@ars.usda.gov) for review and approval.

**(Note: In areas where none of the BPA vendors offer service, you may contract with the local wireless vendor but must still submit the ARS Cellular Device/Service Plan Form to the TMACO office for approval prior to doing so.)**

- The TMACO Office will review the submitted request and either approve the order or return it to the WDAR for additional information/clarification.
- The TMACO Office will use the ARS Cellular Device/Service Plan Form to populate an inventory database of ARS Wireless Assets.
- Once approved, the TMACO Office will return the signed form to the WDAR, who will forward the form to the applicable BPA vendor for processing.

**6.3** To purchase wireless service from a vendor other than Verizon, AT&T, or Sprint, the WDAR must submit a waiver to the TMACO Office that includes:

- Name of office/location requesting waiver.
- Point of contact for the request including name, phone number(s), email address, and physical address.
- Description of the device(s) to be purchased, the anticipated cost including fixed and recurring service fees.
- Reason the purchase cannot be made through one of the BPAs.
- Signature of WDAR.

All approvals will be subject to TMACO authorization.

- 6.4 Upon employee separation or retirement, Government-owned wireless assets should be returned to the WDAR and services discontinued or reassigned to another employee or contractor. The WDAR must submit these changes to the TMACO Office using the ARS Cellular Device/Service Plan Form for approval prior to reassigning or cancelling service.
- 6.5 If an employee relocates to another ARS office/location and is allowed to take his device, the WDAR will submit the ARS Cellular Device/Service Plan Form to the TMACO Office indicating the new office/location. The TMACO Office will ensure the device and service plan are transferred to the receiving office/location's wireless account.
- 6.6 Upon office closure or relocation, the WDAR will provide the necessary modifications, changes, or deletions for recurring service charges to the TMACO Office for approval using the ARS Cellular Device/Service Plan Form.
- 6.7 Upon office closure or relocation, Government-owned wireless assets should be moved or properly discarded. Procedures for disposition of wireless assets are outlined in the Agricultural Property Management Regulations.

## 7. Definitions

ARS	Agricultural Research Service
BPA	Blanket Purchase Agreement
CSS	Communications Services Staff
NAL	National Agricultural Library
NFC	National Finance Center
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
PDA	Personal Digital Assistant
PED	Personal Electronic Device
POC	Point of Contact
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
TMACO	Telecommunications Mission Area Control Officer
TUMS	Telephone and Utilities Management System
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WDAR	Wireless Designated Agency Representative

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Paul Gibson  
Chief Information Officer

02/28/2012  
Date

EXHIBIT A

**ARS Cellular Device/Service Plan Order Form**

**WDAR Information:**

Last Name: First Name:  
Telephone Number: E-Mail Address:

**End User Information:**

Last Name: First Name:  
Telephone Number: E-Mail Address:

**Billing Address:**

**The first address line of all accounts MUST begin with "USDA/ARS." For example: USDA/ARS/HQ/OCIO/CSS or USDA/ARS/NPA**

Office/Location: **USDA/ARS/**  
Street Address 1:  
Street Address 2:  
City: State: Zip Code:

**Equipment Delivery Information: (if applicable)**

Attention:  
Ship to Address (Line 1):  
Ship to Address (Line 2):  
City: State: Zip Code:

**Customer Requirements (Choose those that apply):**

New Service \_\_\_ Modify Existing Service \_\_\_ Disconnect Service \_\_\_  
Transfer Device and Service to Different End User \_\_\_  
Transfer Device and Service to Different Office/Location \_\_\_  
Transfer Number to Different Wireless Provider \_\_\_  
Equipment Upgrade/Replacement \_\_\_  
Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Equipment Type (Choose One):**

Cell Phone \_\_\_ BlackBerry \_\_\_ iPhone \_\_\_ iPad \_\_\_  
Android \_\_\_ Air Card \_\_\_ MIFI \_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_

**Model Name/Number:**

**Existing Vendor/Preferred Vendor if New Activation (Choose One):**

AT&T \_\_\_ Verizon \_\_\_ Sprint \_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_

**If Modifying Existing Service Plan/Cancelling Service/Upgrading Device/Transferring Device:**

Existing Account Number:  
Affected Cellular Number:

**If Transferring Device & Service to Different Office/Location:**

Please provide the following and the TMACO Office will handle the transfer for you.

Receiving Office/Location: **USDA/ARS/**

Street Address 1:

Street Address 2:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

**If Transferring Cellular Number to Different Vendor:**

Please provide the following and the TMACO Office will handle the transfer for you.

Receiving Office/Location: **USDA/ARS/**

Street Address 1:

Street Address 2:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

**Comments:**

**Supervisor Approval:**

**TMACO Office Approval:**